CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 4 MARCH 1993 FROM THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A DOCUMENT ENTITLED "POSITION OF THE CHINESE DELEGATION ON TRANSPARENCY IN ARMAMENTS"

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a document of the Chinese delegation entitled "Position of the Chinese Delegation on Transparency in Armaments".

I would be grateful if this document could be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and as a working paper of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments.

(Signed): HOU Zhitong
Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs
Head of the delegation of the People's Republic of China to the Conference on Disarmament

Position of the Chinese Delegation on Transparency in Armaments

1. The objective of transparency in armament (TIA) is to a enhance peace, security and stability in the various countries and regions of the world. Appropriate and practicable TIA measures are conducive to the establishment and promotion of international trust and the easing of international tensions, and help countries to decide upon appropriate levels of armament.

2. In the pursuit of TIA, the fundamental principle of undiminished national security for all countries must be observed. Under the Charter of the United Nations, States enjoy an inherent right of individual and collective self-defence. Hence all countries have the right to possess and maintain means of military defence at a level commensurate with their legitimate self-defence requirements. All TIA measures must be conducive to maintaining and enhancing rather than jeopardizing or compromising countries' right to self-defence and their legitimate defence capabilities. Countries are likewise under an obligation not to seek armaments exceeding their legitimate security requirements.

3. Specific TIA measures should be appropriate and practicable and formulated jointly by all countries through consultations on an equal footing. The nature and scope of these measures should be determined in the light of the objectives agreed upon by various countries, and subject to amendment where called for by developments in the international situation and countries' changing requirements.

4. Transparency in armament is difficult to pursue independently, as it depends on international conditions. To promote TIA, Members of the United Nations should all strictly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter, abide by the five principles of peaceful co-existence, settle international disputes through peaceful means, and oppose and eliminate from international relations interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and the use or threat of force in displays of hegemony and power politics.

5. As levels of armament vary greatly between countries, their actual influence on regional and global security also varies. It is incumbent on the countries with the largest and most advanced nuclear and conventional arsenals to proceed to drastic reductions in their heavy and offensive weapons, their naval and air forces in particular while taking the lead in making public information on their arsenals and the deployment of their forces. This will facilitate drastic reductions in global armament levels and enhance the sense of security of other countries and regions, which in turn will generate favourable conditions for universal TIA.

6. As different countries and regions face different political, military and security conditions, the same TIA measures may affect countries in various ways. It is, therefore, not advisable to insist on uniform TIA. Instead, countries should be allowed to opt for such measures as they see fit in their respective national conditions. At the same time, to promote TIA, efforts

should be made to encourage countries to participate extensively in jointly agreed TIA measures on the basis of equality, without coercion, in accordance with their specific conditions.

7. While promoting the United Nations mechanism for TIA, encouragement should also be given to bilateral and regional exchanges of military information, TIA measures and related arrangements, and to unilateral endeavours in this respect.

8. Measures intended to limit, control or make transparent the application of science and technology for military purposes must not compromise or affect the peaceful applications of advances in science and technology, by the developing countries in particular, or influence international cooperation and exchanges in this field.